

Grill Morrow, Spy, in Trial at Michigan

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COURT ROOM, ST. JOSEPH, MICH.—Francis Morrow, Government spy, is having a hard time explaining discrepancies between his testimony in the Foster case and that given from the witness stand against C. E. Ruthenberg.

In the Foster trial, Walsh asked Morrow whether he had been an official of the Workers Defense and Relief Committee of Philadelphia, and Morrow denied ever having been an official of that organization. Later Walsh faced him with a file of checks which Morrow had signed as treasurer.

In giving his testimony against Ruthenberg, Morrow tried to avoid the pitfall of the Foster case and admitted having held some sort of official position. He was then asked by Walsh whether he had not denied this in the Foster case and found himself in a tight corner, in spite of his effort to correct his previous mistake.

Morrow denied on cross examination by Walsh that the question whether the Communist Party should become an open party by merging into the Workers Party was an issue in the Party before the Bridgman Convention. Later he was shown by his own notes that the caucus of which he was a member during the convention had adopted a certain position on that question.

Much time was taken up by the reading of the 1921 program of the Communist Party, on which the prosecution bases its chief hope for a conviction. It was noticed that the farmers on the jury were particularly interested when the section of the program calling upon the working farmers to join with the city workers in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression was read.

The section of the program which declares that the class-struggle will inevitably develop into a struggle of armed force and pledges the Communist Party to the task of educating the workers to an understanding of this fact particularly stressed by the prosecution in reading the program. The language of the program, however, seems to easily come within the interpretation that it is a historical forecast and not an advocacy of acts of "crime, sabotage, violence or unlawful acts of terrorism," prohibited by the Michigan law.

In the Foster case Judge White ruled that the state must prove advocacy of acts of crime, sabotage, violence or unlawful methods of terrorism and that a merely historical forecast that violence ensue in the working out of social forces was not a violation of the law.

It was a curious fact of Morrow's testimony, covering the testimony of Morrow regarding the convention itself, that he could only testify that Ruthenberg attended the convention and was at the opening a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party and that he was re-elected at the close of the convention. So far as any part which Ruthenberg took in the Convention proceedings, Morrow was evidently unable to give any information.